THE
CATHOLIC RADICAL

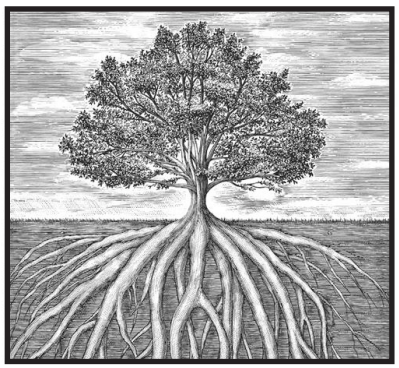
"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

June/July 2018 ***Price: For whatever it's worth.***

Invisible Radicality

by Claire Schaeffer-Duffy

An invitation from Frits ter Kuile of the Jeannette Noël Catholic Worker in Amsterdam prompted our May trip to Germany and England. After reading Scott's book *Nothing is Impossible*, Frits recommended a speaking tour timed to coincide with the annual gathering of European Catholic Workers.



The evening sky is still full of light when Bernd Büscher picks us up from the Düsseldorf Airport. He and his wife Sabine live in a rent-controlled apartment in the Holy Cross neighborhood of Dortmund, an industrial city in western Germany, a former mining hub, famous for its beers. The stucco two-storied duplexes and apartment buildings along Kreuzestrasse are in the style of Art Nouveaux. The Büschers' building is painted a warm red.

Bernd is the kind of scholar Peter Maurin would be proud of, a responsive intellectual, widely read. He is middle-aged, clad in jeans and a t-shirt. His thinning hair is perpetually tousled, and there are dark circles under his eyes which are not readily noticeable because his face often creases into a smile.

A Protestant, Bernd is more versed in Catholic Worker philosophy than many of us American Catholic Workers. After learning about the movement as a young man, he and Sabine spent time at two US communities. Upon their return, Bernd initiated Friends of the Catholic Worker. From that group emerged the Kana Catholic Worker Soup Kitchen.

Located in north Dortmund, Kana is one of the cleanest Catholic Worker soup kitchens I have ever visited. The place serves 250 meals a day, hosts round-tables and communal prayer. Like many Catholic Worker projects, Kana is also a conduit of information for local peace and justice initiatives. Gray hairs are not the only ones who attend our talk here Tuesday evening. I am pleased to see students from Dortmund University among the audience.

This year's European gathering is held at a comfortable camp facility outside the city of Dülmen. It is the largest reunion to date with nearly fifty people attending. The leisurely schedule allows for swims in the nearby lake and morning runs with young Catholic Workers along lanes lined with linden trees.

Assembled here are university students, cultivators, activists, artists, visionaries, parents with small children, teens raised in community, and restless souls – the usual Catholic Worker lot. Uta, a volunteer at Hamburg's Brot und Rosen (Bread and Roses) Catholic Worker tells me she has been living with Jesus since she was sixteen. I fall in love with Irtraud, the smiling, brown-eyed woman who, in every discussion, preaches universal basic income as the solution to all social ills.

The crowd is white, but not clueless. Within minutes of my meeting Dan, one of the energetic theology students at the Amsterdam Catholic Worker, he

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Our Ecological Moment

by Eric Cussen Anglada

In the early 1960s, Dorothy Day watched as John Filigar, the long-time farmer at the Catholic Worker's Peter Maurin Farm, impulsively hopped on his beloved tractor and plowed under all of the community's tomatoes and corn, simply because he wanted to restore some order to the fields. "It hurts me," Dorothy sighed in *Loaves and Fishes*, her classic chronicle of the first three decades of the movement, "to think of the green tomatoes that would have been ripening until Thanksgiving, of the late corn which could have been dried and fed to the pigs." Such an image – exasperating, absurd – captures the all-too-typical struggles of CW farms since their beginnings in 1936. In Kate Hennessy's wonderful new book on her grandmother Dorothy Day, we learn of incidents like visitors driving off with all of the freshly preserved food and of how that first farm, Maryfarm, devolved into an actual cult. Thanks to such wild stories, many have simply written off the farms as the movement's least important, and certainly least successful, aspect.

However disastrous these early farming experiments may have been, today the agrarian aspect of the movement is flourishing. Day's and Maurin's passion and vigor for the land is finally being born out within the 21st century CW, with roughly two dozen farms all over the world—from New Zealand and England to Mexico and the far reaches of northern Canada, to numerous communities in the

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Ecological

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Dorothy Day & John Filigar at Maryfarm

Midwest.

My wife Brenna and I, along with another family of four, helped found our new Saint Isidore Farm community in southwest Wisconsin in 2016. Here we work no-till vegetable gardens and raise animals, engage in various resistance work, practice hospitality, and host educational workshops and barn dances. Last year we put on a national CW farm gathering and 75 people showed up. Some of the long-tenured farmers were astounded at the numbers, wondering aloud, "Where did all of these people come from?" Like never before, Catholic Workers are talking about chickens and compost, soil and sustainability, gardening and the green revolution. Here was a room full of people who agree with the current pontiff that care for Creation is a work of mercy, not unlike feeding the hungry and visiting the sick. Here were people developing thriving state-wide food cooperatives, restoring prairie amid the heart of Big Ag and the "corn belt," practicing a "regenerative agriculture" that sinks carbon from the atmosphere back into the earth. Here were communities who had embraced, each in their own unique way, what Peter Maurin called "the green revolution" – the spirit of the early medieval Irish monks who, amid the collapse of the Roman Empire, lived out "cult, culture, and cultivation"—prayer, study, and agriculture.

It is a bitter irony that Maurin's phrase has become associated almost exclusively with the mid-20th century agricultural developments encouraging the use of mechanization, pesticides, and GMOs in order to grow food. This "green revolution" has greatly contributed to the looming collapse of our ecological equilibrium: water depletion in the agricultural Great Plains, "dead zones" and algae blooms created by agricultural run-off, loss of biodiversity, climate change, and the virtual disappearance of traditional ways of living well on the land.

Sarah Young

Such is our unique ecological moment. Since the founding of Saint Isidore Farm, we have set about to embrace the kind of "ecological conversion" of which Pope Francis has written about so lucidly in *Laudato Si*. We raise much of our own food, rely heavily on solar energy, cook and heat with wood, and compost all of our waste. We also support our nearby urban house of hospitality with increasing amounts of fresh food. This winter we hope to unplug our fridge and utilize a cold room for food storage. We have found that these small steps, when taken in the context of community, lead to a sense of contemplative joy and prophetic responsibility. With each new move towards ecological sanity, we're able to go a bit deeper. What's important is simply beginning.

More than any particular ecological practice, it seems our most basic task as Catholic Workers is to re-imagine our relationship with the Earth; to re-learn that we are a part of – not apart from – the living, breathing, interconnected world of Creation. Day and Maurin saw that in our technological culture we had distanced ourselves from the life of the soil. Amid this perilous ecological moment, we have the opportunity to embrace a wholly different way of being that rivals the one that is ravaging our planet—one that embraces cooperation, connection, simplicity, and reciprocity with the land. Fundamentally, this is a spiritual task. "The external deserts of the world are growing," as Benedict XVI so wisely said, "because the internal deserts are so vast."

As ridiculous as many of those early CW farm projects were, Maurin's and Day's hope for thriving sustainable communities devoted to prayer, education, resistance, hospitality, community, and creation care – emerging out of the rubble of Empire – is more important now than ever. Let us continue to learn from and inspire one another while finding bold new ways of being in this beautiful, fragile world. Ω

How can we teach our children about creation and creator when there are only man-made streets about? How [can we teach] about life and death and resurrection unless they see the seed fall into the ground and die and yet bring forth fruit?

Dorothy Day

Vol. 34, No. 6 **THE** **June/July 2018**

CATHOLIC RADICAL

Published every two months by:
The Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker Community
52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089
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Founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, the Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

Radicality

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is discussing the documentary *I Am Not Your Negro*, based on the writings of James Baldwin. The movie was part of the community's film series on racism last fall.

The Catholic Worker directory lists eleven European houses and farms in six countries. Members of the German, Dutch, English, and Swedish communities attend the Dülmen reunion. Unlike many American Catholic Workers, where guests of all sorts make their home, the Europeans primarily host refugees and the undocumented. Other than that, the projects and dilemmas described during the community updates, sound very familiar. Amsterdam reports that five from their huge household are branching off to open Dorothy House in the countryside. A young couple from the German city of Freiburg say they have given up trying to start a Catholic Worker, after months of meetings and searching for a property. Richard from Dover, England is beginning to think he is the only one in his discerning group of five who *really* wants to live with the poor.

Scott and I are moved by the Europeans' knowledge of Dorothy's and Peter's writings. Their zeal for Catholic Worker ideals. Their faith discipline evident in the communal morning prayer. Their hearty joy. The Saturday cabaret includes a hilarious rewrite of Dostoevski's "Grand Inquisitor". In one scene, "Saint Dorothy" makes an entrance after a demanding day at a Catholic Worker house, and the workers throw her out. "Your harsh and dreadful love is too much for us!" they say.

Our German sojourn includes two day trips into Münster, locale for the 2018 *Katholikentag*, a massive national festival celebrating all things Catholic. The Europeans present on the CW movement at *Katholikentag Plus*, the alternative festival. Scott and I speak the following day at the traditional one. He is disappointed in the small turn-out, but I notice tears in the eyes of a few listeners as if our description of the Catholic Worker way of life, mundane to us, at times, has stirred up a deep, unacknowledged hope.

Our six-hour ride to London in a van full of British Catholic Workers takes us through the French port of Calais. At the passport checkpoint, young, heavily armed soldiers in snappy berets trot out from a nearby police station and search the queue of vehicles for migrants.

Several years ago, Brother Johan Maertens, a Belgian monk, opened Calais' Saint Maria Skobtsova Catholic Worker. The place offers meals, a bed, and showers to refugees who have come by the thousands to the port city in hopes of crossing the English Channel into Britain. A member of the London Catholic Worker community, who volunteers periodically at Saint Maria, later tells me it is hard to watch the brutal cat-and-mouse game between the French authorities and migrants, the police beatings, the tearing down of tented shops which are the migrants' means of livelihood. "Calais is an impossibly complex place," she says.

Kana soup kitchen, Bernd in plaid

Yet here are Catholic Workers, at the front lines of Europe's most poignant and challenging crisis, serving Christ in a people perched on the rim of France's northern shore.

London's Giuseppe Conlon Catholic Workers live in a former Catholic church and its adjacent vicarage. The place is home to eighteen male guests and four volunteers, yet doesn't feel crowded. The church hall has been re-purposed into a spacious living room and dining area. The sanctuary serves as chapel, storage, and meeting space. All other rooms provide sleeping quarters.

In Dülmen, it was lots of laughter and late night talk. Here, the tedium of hospitality is subtly evident in the young volunteers, all of them highly educated. They live on modest stipends, their small bedrooms their one refuge from a constant immersion in human need and political causes.

I am drawn to Ghazal because of her gregariousness and habit of shyly covering her mouth as she speaks. She is 35 with a law degree from London's prestigious School of South Asian and African Studies. This Catholic Worker experiment baffles her family, she says. Six months in, she too wishes for a "more normal life." But Ghazal is a wholehearted participant, editing the community's newspaper, attending the weekly vigil for immigrants and refugees, sharing supper every night with men whose lives are vastly different from her own. She is the first Muslim Catholic Worker I have met.

"A speaking tour in Europe," is how I grandly described our travels before departure. The description evoked fantasies of packed lecture halls with the audience occasionally erupting in wild applause. Reality was quite the opposite. Our venues were modest, the audience small and already committed.

Yet for me, the trip brought an unexpected revival of faith in this movement I meandered into more than 30 years ago.

"Do you think of yourself as a radical?" asked Ine, the beautiful young German who was at the Dülmen reunion collecting interviews for her documentary on Christianity and social movements.

"Oh no," I said. "I am just an ordinary woman, a mother, a grandmother with pretty traditional values."

"But isn't there a radicality to this life of hospitality? An invisible radicality."

The phrase brought to mind a map I once saw of the United States, the cartographer a female cyclist on a tour of alternative communities. Within the pencilled outline of the US, she had traced, in red felt-tipped marker, her bike route. Each dot marked a place to visit. A Catholic Worker house in Alabama. A Midwest collective committed to sustainable living. The red line, which looped back to its starting point, seemed like an underground current pulsing hope. Our European trip put us into a similar circuitry, and I have returned energized. Ω

We Our Are Stories

by Susan Schaller

The story I told myself grew from being raised in a violent, dysfunctional family. It was a story of victimhood and self-pity, separating me from you, and everyone. However, I was drawn to connection and community, and wondering about an alternative to violence became an early pastime. I didn't have words or the ability to articulate my feelings when I was five, six, and seven, but I remember a loud "WRONG" rising inside of me when I saw all the selfish individual greed and competition (and when my older brothers abused me). I searched for a different story, but I didn't know where to look.

As an adult, I began marching against wars and injustice, and raging about the issue of the month to anyone who happened to cross my path. Slowly, I saw how I was engaging and creating my own battles, doing little or nothing to end violence. Gratefully, we, humans, have been endowed with a great gift: the image of God/Love/the Great Alternative to ego and separateness. Jesus' radical message of Love is about transformation. Peace begins with me. Peace starts with internal housekeeping, ridding myself of my fear, the root of anger and violence, greed and self-centeredness, rewriting our sick stories.

I began to find communitis and people who were also seeking ways of living which encourage peace, inclusion, justice, and healing from our wounded, fragmented selves. I was shocked and delighted to meet people who lived principles, instead of just talking about them, including Catholic Workers. What I had imagined and sought for decades was a reality. This gift inspired me to keep practicing, meditate, and become more mindful, connecting with life, instead of isolating.

I changed. I began to see myself in others, connected, not separate. Practicing nonviolence, I began facing my fears, a prerequisite to asserting and recognizing equality. More and more, I could look people in the eye, appealing to their humanity and capacity to love and connect, instead of their angry words or threatening fists. Nonviolence gives people a choice, reminds them that they can do better or be different, connecting with instead of fighting against. My story changed, becoming our story. Instead of victimhood, isolation and brokenness, the thread is now union, community, and WE.

I concentrate more and more on changing stories, the most powerful connecting tool we have. Recently, I rewrote *Hansel and Gretel*, one of the most violent Grimm stories. Nonviolence is not the absence of violence, but transformation.

In the original, during a time of drought and famine, a stepmother convinces her husband to abandon his two children in the woods where they are captured by a cannibalist witch. Hansel is put in a cage and fed to fatten him up, while Gretel is forced to work. The children manage to escape when Gretel pushes the witch into an oven.

In my version, Hansel and Gretel trap the witch, instead of burning her. The stepmother has a change of heart when she sees the kids return, but is appalled that Hansel and Gretel have left the old lady to starve, so the family goes together to the gingerbread house.

The transformed stepmother asks the witch if she can mend her cannibalistic ways and join them. Still worried about food, the stepmother asks the witch how she fattened Hansel. The witch sees her chance to become a part of, instead of the enemy. She asks to be let out, promising to show them her secret. The family has to face their fears, breathe deeply, and unlock the shed, trusting the witch. Overjoyed and grateful, the witch shows them her secret spring behind the gingerbread house. The entire starving village is invited, and the beloved community feed each other with their flourishing garden.

My hope is that we can build the beloved community, each of us beginning where we can. It is not one person, policy or one area of corruption that is killing us. It is pathological individualism and polarization, the arena for violence. Let us change stories, find unity, and offer community building, nonviolent alternatives. I hope to begin supporting parents and teachers in changing our violent, traditional messages, using the nonviolent *Hansel and Gretel* as an example. I invite and welcome any suggestions or support on how we can change stories for our children and ourselves. Ω

Editor's Note: The author welcomes comments and story ideas. She can be reached at: susan.schaller@gmail.com.

Rejoice and Be Glad

by Pope Francis

Editor's Note: The following is an excerpt from Pope Francis' 4/8/18 apostolic exhortation, Gaudete et Exsultate.

"**Rejoice and be glad**" (Mt 5:12), Jesus tells those persecuted or humiliated for his sake. The Lord asks everything of us, and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. He wants us to be saints and not to settle for a bland and mediocre existence....

[A]harmful ideological error is found in those who find suspect the social engagement of others, seeing it as superficial, worldly, secular, materialist, communist, or populist. Or they relativize it, as if there are other more important matters, or the only thing that counts is one particular ethical issue or cause that they themselves defend. Our defence of the innocent unborn, for example, needs to be clear, firm and passionate, for at stake is the dignity of a human life, which is always sacred and demands love for each person, regardless of his or her stage of development. Equally sacred, however, are the lives of the poor, those already born, the destitute, the abandoned and the underprivileged, the vulnerable infirm, and elderly exposed to covert euthanasia, the victims of human trafficking, new forms of slavery, and every form of rejection. We cannot uphold an ideal of holiness that would ignore injustice in a world where some revel, spend with abandon and live only for the latest consumer goods, even as others look on from afar, living their entire lives in abject poverty.

We often hear it said that, with respect to relativism and the flaws of our present world, the situation of migrants, for example, is a lesser issue. Some Catholics consider it a secondary issue compared to the "grave" bioethical questions. That a politician looking for votes might say such a thing is understandable, but not a Christian, for whom the only proper attitude is to stand in the shoes of those brothers and sisters of ours who risk their lives to offer a future to their children. Can we not realize that this is exactly what Jesus demands of us, when he tells us that in welcoming the stranger we welcome him (cf. Mt 25:35)? Saint Benedict did so readily, and though it might have "complicated" the life of his monks, he ordered that all guests who knocked at the monastery door be welcomed "like Christ", with a gesture of veneration; the poor and pilgrims were to be met with "the greatest care and solicitude".

A similar approach is found in the Old Testament: "**You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him, for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt**" (Ex 22:21). "**When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress him. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt**" (Lev 19:33-34). This is not a notion invented by some Pope, or a momentary fad. In today's world too, we are called to follow the path of spiritual wisdom proposed by the prophet Isaiah to show what is pleasing to God. "**Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn**" (58:7-8)....Ω

Kings Bay Plowshares

Pablo Picasso

On Easter Tuesday, the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., seven Catholics entered the US Navy Submarine Base in Kings Bay, Georgia to make a dramatic appeal for nuclear disarmament. This base is the east coast port for the Trident submarine, the world's most destructive nuclear weapon. Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, of Seattle, Washington, the west coast base of the Tridents called them, "An oven without walls."

Inspired by the prophet Isaiah and calling themselves "The Kings Bay Plowshares," they are: Mark Colville, from Amistad Catholic Worker, New Haven, Connecticut; Clare Grady, from Peter DeMott Catholic Worker, Ithaca, New York; Martha Hennessy, from Vermont and Maryhouse Catholic Worker, New York City; Fr. Steve Kelly, S.J. from Oakland, California; Elizabeth McAllister from Jonah House, Baltimore, Maryland; Patrick O'Neill, from Father Charlie Mullholland Catholic Worker, Garner, North Carolina; and Carmen Trotta, from Saint Joseph Catholic Worker, New York City.

At nuclear weapons storage bunkers, the nuclear weapons administration building, and a monument site with replica missiles, they hung banners, poured blood, spray painted, put up crime scene tape, and hammered on the missile display.

They were arrested and jailed until their arraignment on May 16, when four of them were released on bail. They face 11 years in prison. For more information, email: theresecw2@gmail.com. Ω

Murder on Mott Street

a Catholic Worker mystery

reviewed by William Clew

Editor's Note: The author is an award-winning writer for The Catholic Free Press.

"Scott Schaeffer-Duffy has written a lively mystery novella involving real people and a fictional villain with a little science fiction tossed in.

Mr. Schaeffer-Duffy and his wife Claire run the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker house at 52 Mason Street, Worcester, Massachusetts, and have been part of the Catholic Worker movement for many years.

His book, *Murder on Mott Street: a Catholic Worker mystery*, is set in and around the area where the first Catholic Worker house was established in New York City's lower East Side.

The real people include Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, founders of the Catholic Worker movement, Ms. Day's daughter Tamar, and some other Catholic Worker personalities. Short biographies on each of them appear in the back of the book.

And of course, this being a murder mystery, there is a bad guy who goes by a few different name as the story progresses.

In his preface, the author says that, though the story is historical fiction, "virtually every line of Dorothy's and many of Peter's are citations of the actual words." Real incidents in their lives become part of the story.

And Mr. Schaeffer-Duffy is also able to tell the reader what the Catholic Worker movement is all about and make all of it fit seamlessly into the story without losing any of the suspense.

He writes with tension, humor, and excitement in equal measure in a straight-forward, journalistic style that holds the reader's interest.

For example, early in the story, Tamar, a real person, spots the villain, a fictional one, acting in a strange manner. "That made her at once curious and suspicious," he wrote, "If she had not been so, more people would have been murdered."

No one with an ounce of curiosity is going to put the book down at that point.

Murder on Mott Street is entertaining and informative and well worth the short time it takes to read." Ω

Copies of **Murder of Mott Street**
available at:

Book Release and Signing
Sunday, June 3, 1:30 - 3 P.M.

Holy Cross College
Hogan Center Room 402

Signing
Saturday, June 9, 9 A.M. - 3 P.M.

Holy Cross College Bookstore

or send $12, plus $2 for shipping to:

Scott Schaeffer-Duffy
52 Mason St., Worcester, MA 01610

LETTERS

Dear Scott,

Just received *The Catholic Radical* today. As usual: great issue! Having articles on the front page about Big guns (military spending) and little guns next to each other was brilliant. I remember a Faith and Resistance Retreat for Holy Innocents in Washington, DC years ago where we had a Big guns-little guns theme. Accordingly, we had demonstrations at the Pentagon and the National Rifle Association. We had more police presence at the NRA.

With all the discussion about gun violence in our country, nobody is making a link between our daily drone attacks and air strikes abroad and domestic school shootings.

I listen to National Public Radio (we're in the car a lot here in rural Virginia) and there have been no commentators discuss how our enormous violence around the world (not to mention our prevailing threat to use nuclear weapons) influences shooting sprees here.

There is talk of capitalism and that fable of trickle down economics as the gap between the filthy rich and the majority poor widens.

What I really see happening is not a trickle down violence, but a cascading river of violence — from war-making to gun violence in our schools.

...By the way, I hit 63 this year. Movie ticket discounts aren't as great as they first sound. I'm just hoping to make it to 65 so I can get some health insurance through Medicaid. That is, of course, if the government hasn't defunded Medicaid and put all the money into the military!!

Meanwhile, let's just enjoy the ride!

Bill Frankel Streit
Little Flower Catholic Worker Farm
Louisa, Virginia

Editor's Note: The Washington Post *reported on April 5, 2018: "...The president, who on the campaign trail said one way to deter terrorists would be to kill their families, was reportedly shown a recording of a previous drone strike and asked' Why did you wait?' after the video showed the strike was delayed until the target's family home was out of range."*

Dear Claire & Scott,
...I agree with you in condemning colonial America for its persecution of Native Americans, and the enslavement of Black people as well. But you and I have never agreed about the Palestinian-Israeli situation. I don't believe you can believe in Christ, who was Jewish, and not have some affinity for the Jewish people... who have had a continuous presence in the Mideast, but it's more than that. They have ancient, cultural roots in the Mideast. They were displaced by the Arabs, persecuted by the Romans, and forced to wander the face of the earth where they were discriminated against practically everywhere they went. It all culminated in the horrors of the Holocaust involving atrocities that surpass the blackest nightmares of hell. I think that the Jewish people have been the most persecuted, scapegoated people on earth, even more so than the Black peoples. I've always admired the British for being the only nation on the planet to assist the Jewish people in returning to their homeland and carving out a nation that the Jewish people could call their own....

Daryl Prendergast
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

Editor's Note: As Christians, we certainly do revere Judaism and as human beings we are horrified by the long history of anti-Semitism, especially since so much of it was and continues to be perpetrated by Christians. We also recognize the deep roots the Jewsih people have in the Holy Land. But we also acknowledge the ancient roots, in that same land, of the Palestinians. We ally ourselves with many American and Israeli Jews, who share our belief that injustice to Jews should not be addressed by injustice to Palestinians. We draw on the prophetic tradition of peace and justice for all to support our opposition to any state that gives preferential treatment to a religious, racial, or cultural group. We opposed those policies in South Africa, Bosnia, Darfur, and Northern Ireland, just as we oppose them now in Burma, Tibet, Israel/Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and other exclusively Islamic states. As Christians and Americans, we believe all peoples deserve equal rights in every place where they choose to live.

Dear Scott and Claire,
As always, you've tackled lots of challenging thoughts and facts in the latest *Catholic Radical*. But nothing inspired me more than the quote from Saint Bernard and the photo of Rembrandt's masterpiece.

Father John Doyle
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Scott,
...Have you ever read Thomas Berry? He has had a big impact on me. I even visited his grave-site at the Green Mountain Monastery in Vermont. If you haven't read him, I will gladly send you a copy of his prophetic *The Great Work: Our Way to the Future*. I'm trying to influence your thinking, which probably does not need it, on such matters related to the drastic plight of our beautiful planet earth, "our sister, mother" as Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si*.

Wishing you a happy 60th birthday! Believe me, there is a lot of life ahead of you. I turn 88 in July and stay very active. My 60s and 70s were wonderful, and I still enjoy every day. Of course there are infirmities, but there is also much joy. With an active mind like yours, time will fly by for sure. *Carpe diem*!

Richard McCarthy
Lawrence, Massachusetts

Dear Scott,
I enjoyed the book [*Murder on Mott Street*] immensely. You captured the atmosphere of the time period. At certain parts, I laughed out loud.... It was so well written, it reminded me of an old radio program. I could see the entire story while reading as if I was watching it. I hope the numerous Catholic Worker houses around the country are ordering copies.

Richard N. Douglass
Northampton, Massachusetts

Catholic Worker Calendar

Dutch Catholic Worker Frits ter Kuile & Scott

June 6 — European Catholic Worker Travelogue: Join us for a slide presentation by Claire and Scott Schaeffer-Duffy about their May trip to meet Catholic Workers in Germany and England. 7 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Refeshments to follow.

June 13, 27 & July 11, 25— Evening Prayer: Join us for prayer and Taize chant. 7 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

June 16 & July 14 — Vigil to Reverse the Gun Culture: Join us at The Gun Parlor shooting range from 12:30-1:30 P.M., 170 Prescott Street, Worcester.

I dream of giving birth to a child who will ask,
"Mother, what was war?"

Eve Merriam

Mason Street Musings

Our neighbor Lula Dyer died of cancer on May 15. She was 88 years old. It was hard to watch her body waning during Eastertide, to come into the Dyer's house in the middle of the day and find her lying on the sofa, her face turned into the cushions. She was always such a strong woman. Hoping for some resurrection, her daughters daily begged her to "eat something." The last time we spoke, Lulu had every intention to be up and about the business of living, if the Lord willed. She was the matriarch of a vast and close-knit family, and her passing reverberates among a host of children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Many streamed in and out of her home the week after she died.

Lula was my staunchest ally during our annual Earth Day clean-ups on Mason Street. She'd show up, rake in hand, her graying hair wrapped in a doo rag. Together, we'd haul out old tires from the vacant lot, bag up the litter and broken bottles, and mutter about the lazy males around us. "Big, ole strapping boys, and they're doing *nothing*," I'd say. Then the two of us would enjoy the unique communion of women who feel put upon.

It was always God and family, with her. Both enabled her to live deeply amid injustices and losses that would have left a lesser soul seething. Both kept her going when someone shot her first husband, Gilbert, leaving her a widow at age 35 with seven small children. She believed in a God who "wouldn't suffer no more to come upon us than we could bear." And if that faith wavered when whites fatally stabbed her 19-year-old son Philip in October of 1974, she never admitted it to me.

Lula and Reverend Douglas Dyer married and moved to Worcester in 1966. They were an established fixture on Mason

Mary Beth Owens

Street when we arrived. In all our years of being neighbors, I don't think she ever sat in our kitchen, though I was often in hers, popping in for a couple of eggs, a teaspoon of baking powder, or some vanilla. "Take what you need," she'd say. Come Easter, I'd drag the children to Mount Sinai Church of God in Christ for some soul-stirring Gospel singing. Lula always sat among the Church Mothers up on the stage beside the podium. She'd raise her arm and nod her head affirmatively whenever the pastor asked the assembled, "Do you believe?"

The fourth of ten children in a family of black southern sharecroppers, Lula worked most of her years on this earth. When I was a young woman and she well into her sixties, I often heard her warming up the car on winter mornings to leave for a 4 A.M. shift at Norton's, her house full of sleeping grandchildren she was helping to raise. The front steps of 49 Mason Street became her favorite afternoon perch only in retirement. Even then, she remained industrious. One lasting image: Lula, 87, sitting barefoot on those front steps one summer afternoon, a laptop perched on her knees. She is clicking away, while two great grandchildren play around her.

"God talks to you through the Scriptures," she once told me. And through the lives of those around us, I would add. Lula's was a sustaining text for me, one I often consulted on faltering days. I wish I had told her that. Although she's departed, I thank God, I can still draw inspiration from her brave and faithful life until my own story ends. Ω

Claire

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